

The media of video games is no stranger to controversy, especially when referring to the media's userbase. Whenever an incident arises, gamers are often stereotyped as misogynistic, immature men who dwell in their parent's basement. This narrative has been proven false time and time again, but the mainstream press refuses to let it die.

In 2015, Miami University released a study about the connection between sexism and gaming. What the study tested was the reactions a male and female player received in the chat room of a game's online multiplayer. The study's results showed that a player's response was related to their level of skill, and that the responses became more aggressive the worse the player's skill is, especially towards the female player.

The mainstream press responded to this study by releasing article after article declaring how the stereotype of male gamers is true, as was evident in *The Washington Post*, *Business Insider UK*, and *Wired UK* article with one opening paragraph stating:

Men are bullies -- at least online, in games, and disproportionately towards women, an international study has found. The kicker though, is that men are most likely to harrass women when they're being beaten by them.

Now, this narrative would be quite news worthy...if it wasn't for the inaccuracy of the study. To begin with, the study itself reused the results and resources acquired from a previous 2013 study with no change in the tested material. Second, the study itself remained exclusively to the game *Halo 3*, and tested no other titles. Third, the sample size used was 189 players over 163 online matches lasting 10 minutes in length, while the game itself has sold well over 10 million copies during it's six years of availability leading up to the original study. Lastly, of those of 189 players, only 11 used outright "hostile, sexist statements" which accounts for 6% of the players tested.

While the inaccuracy of this study should be apparent, as even a writer for *Forbes* wrote a rant on the press' handling of it, there is also another study that came out in Germany four months prior. To contrast with the M.U. study, the Germany study focused on just over 7600 people, ages 14 and up,

both men and women, and over a 3 year period. The German study extensively investigated into each person's gaming habits and tastes, and published the results stating:

Controlling for age and education, it was found that sexist attitudes—measured with a brief scale assessing beliefs about gender roles in society—were not related to the amount of daily video game use or preference for specific genres for both female and male players.

Unfortunately, outside of the lesser known sites at the time that report on games and/or technology, the study wasn't shown or was ridiculed for not agreeing with the stereotype, as was evident in the *Kotaku* and *VentureBeat* articles.

As for how you viewers should view this incident, we'll let you make the final decision.

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